

HB 264 -- Community Schools Program

Sponsor: Walton Gray

This bill creates a grant program to fund community schools in the St. Louis City school district. A community school makes its facilities available to the public, identifies community needs and resources, and initiates programs to improve the cultural, social, recreational, and educational opportunities in the community. A community education program uses public buildings as community centers operated by the district in cooperation with other groups, organizations, and governmental agencies.

The State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must develop a state plan for community education, and the department must administer a grant program to employ a full-time community education director and provide him or her with professional development training. To receive a grant, the St. Louis City school district must apply as prescribed by the department, submit a plan describing its program that has been approved by its local board, establish a council to assist with needs assessment and program priorities; and employ a full-time community education director. A grantee must file a program evaluation and financial statement annually.

The bill establishes the state Council for Community Education which is a 15-member council appointed by the Governor and selected from a list of organizations specified in the bill. The Commissioner of Education within the department will convene the council's organizational meeting. The council may meet up to four times a year.

The provisions of the bill will sunset six years after the effective date of the bill.